

entertainment

■ TRAVELLING: In York Minster, England

In the land of chants and cellphones

Just a warning. Apparently it is possible to have your iPhone in your purse, under your choir robe, and have it somehow inadvertently power itself on, open the iPod, select the weirdest track, and start playing it excruciatingly loudly, all during the priest's very solemn prayer at Evensong.

I know, because that is exactly what happened to me at York Minster yesterday. It went on for an agonizingly long time while I burrowed through my robe and into my purse, located the culprit, held the power button down fiercely, and tried to shut it down multiple times, while the boinging, springing noises continued unhindered.

Fortunately, I put the thing to death before the last Amen, so I'm hoping that everyone behaved like good Anglicans and kept their heads bowed and eyes closed throughout the ruckus.



Natasha Regehr
TRAVELLING

Could there possibly be a worse time or place for such a thing to happen? Did I seriously travel across the Atlantic to cause such a disruption in one of Christendom's most historic sacred sites?

That's the thing about England. It's very, very old, but it's also very new. It's both quaint and modern. You can walk down the pretty little streets, buy whatever you need at some trendy little store, and then step outside, turn around, and find yourself staring up at the spires of a Medieval cathedral. It's all side by side.

I've seen such juxtapositions before, but only at Disney, and their the castles are made of styrofoam. I still can't quite get over the fact that this is the

real deal. Every site is an opportunity to see - or sell - a bit of history.

Even within the Minster itself, there are both admission booths and clergymen, both tourists and worshippers. If you want to come and take photos and learn about the history of the place, you pay your nine pounds; and if you want to come for medita-

tion and prayer, you may enter for free - as long as you're willing to risk being jolted back to modernity by the twang of a chorister's phone.

Natasha Regehr is a member of the Peterborough Singers, and will be sending updates during the choir's stay in York Minster, U.K.